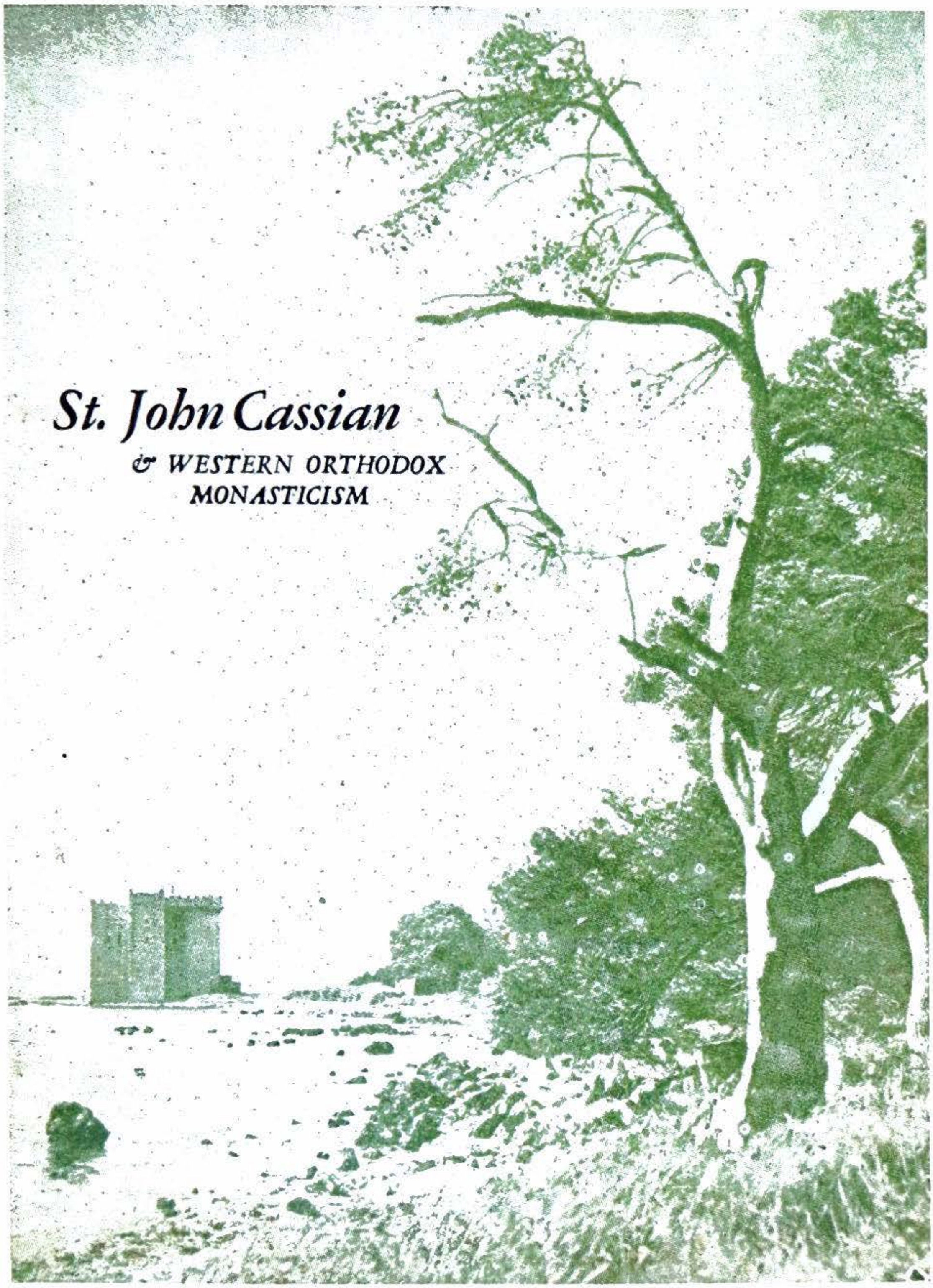
THE ORTHODOX WORD

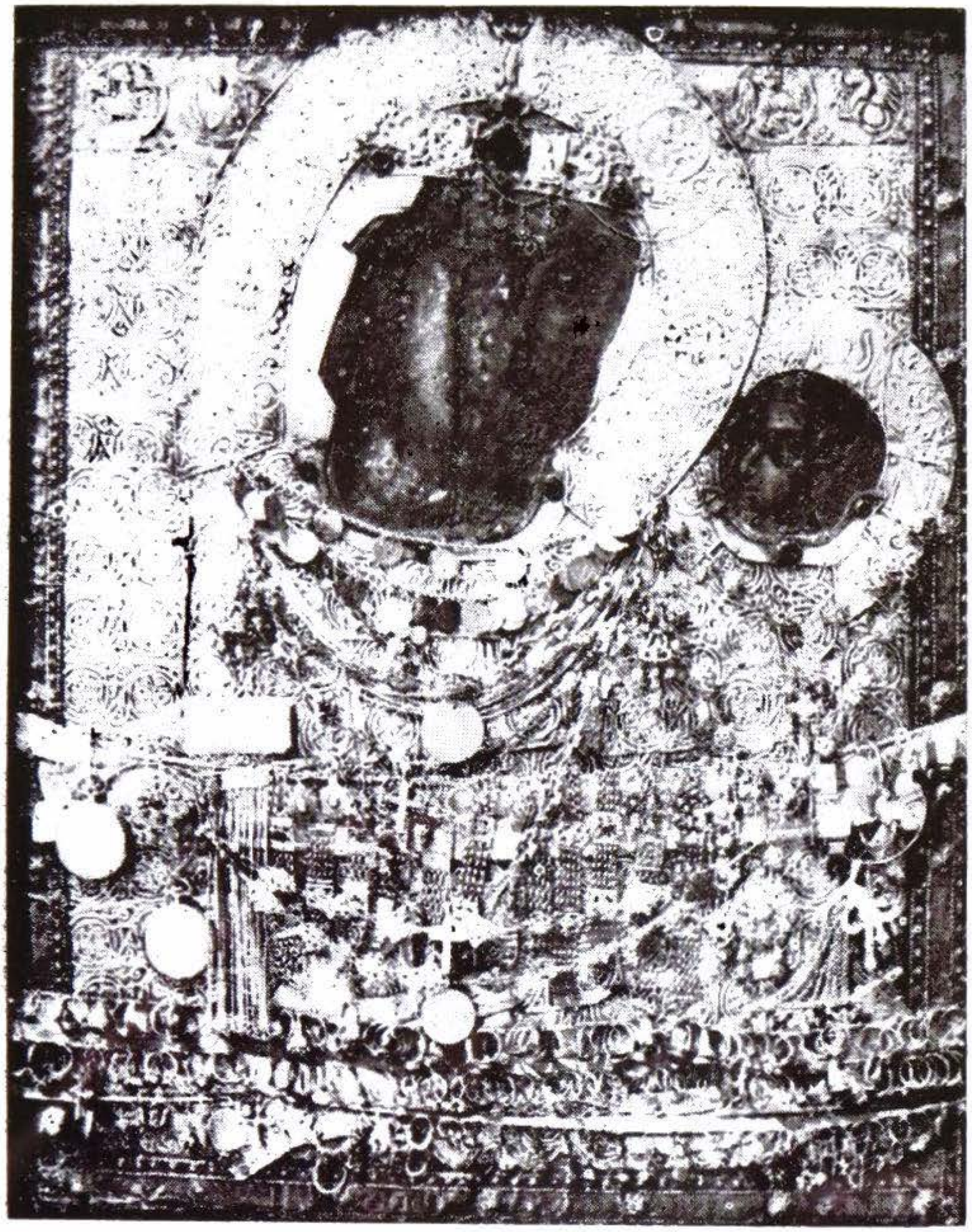
MARCH - APRIL, 1969

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS



St. John Cassian

& WESTERN ORTHODOX MONASTICISM



The Original Diasozousa Icon in Patmos

Commemorated August 15

THE AKATHIST HYMN

KONTAKION, TONE 8

TO THEE, CHOSEN GENERAL, O Mother of God,* we Thy slaves, delivered from evils, sing hymns of victory and thanksgiving.* But as One having invincible dominion,* free us from all misfortunes, that we may cry to Thee:* Rejoice, Unwedded Bride!*

The Holy DIASOZOUSA Mother of God

By HIEROMONK JEREMIAH VASTAS

Member of the Brotherhood of the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Theologian, Patmos, Greece, and Priest-in-charge of the Shrine of the Holy Diasozousa Mother of God

AMONG THE SEVERAL centers of pilgrimage on the sacred and historic Dodecanese island of Patmos is the Church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God, in which is kept the Venerable and Miraculous Icon of the All-Holy Mother of God known as the "Holy *Diasozousa*," or simply as the *Sozousa*. This church, which was privately owned at one time, has now belonged to the Holy Royal Monastery of Saint John the Theologian of Patmos for more than fifty years.

Concerning this Icon and the numerous miracles which are attributed to the intercessions of the Virgin Mary, no one has written until now, despite the fact that the Icon and the miracles present a great deal of interest; for the Icon is very ancient and is known not only in Patmos, but also in the neighboring islands of Samos, Icaria, and Dodecanese, and in Athens, from whence we receive gifts and dedications. The Icon is also known in many parts of the United States of America and in Egypt, on account of the many Patmians who have settled there.

On the occasion of the Monastery's official proclamation of the Church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God as a Monastery Pilgrimage Shrine, we have decided to proceed with the publication of this work in glory and thanksgiving to the All-Holy Mother of God and in gratitude to the pious Patmian people, from far and near, who together with other fellow-countrymen have come to help the needs of this Holy Shrine in so many ways.

We implore the rich blessings of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God upon our people and publicly thank them for their continuous assistance in behalf of this church.

February 2, 1955

Translator's Preface

On Sunday, March 20, 1966, the members of the Greek Orthodox parish of Tallahassee, Florida, named their newly-built church *Panagia Diasozousa*. There resulted a difficulty in fully interpreting this beautiful appellation of the Virgin Mary. Many names are used in Greek to designate the person of the Mother of God, for example, *Panagia Odegetria*, or "the All-Holy Guide," *Panagia Portaitissa* or "the All-Holy Lady of the Door," and various others which are difficult to interpret in English. The word *Diasozousa* comes from the Greek verb *diasozein*, which means "to preserve through," as in the case of an illness, or "to bring one well through" or "keep safe." *Diasozousa*, therefore, the present participle of this Greek verb, would mean "the one who preserves through," or "the one who brings one well through," or "the one who keeps safe." It would be awkward to use a whole sentence to translate the word into English. At any rate, our English-speaking readers should bear in mind that the word applied to the person of the All-Holy Mother of God refers to various miracles and favors granted by God throughout the ages through the intercessions of the Virgin Mary. Our Tallahassee Orthodox people settled for the simple name of "Holy Mother of God Greek Orthodox Church." We are happy to publish the following translation of Hieromonk Jeremiah Vastas' article on our sister church in Patmos, which is a shrine belonging to the well-known Holy Monastery of St. John the Theologian. We may remind our readers that within the premises of this world-famed Monastery is the cave where Saint John the Theologian wrote the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse), the last of the canonical books of the Christian New Testament.

Fr. James J. Laliberte
Tallahassee, Florida

THE MIRACULOUS ICON

NO TESTIMONY has been preserved concerning the origins of this holy and miraculous Icon. Oral tradition in Patmos mentions that the Icon belongs to the seventy Icons painted by St. Luke the Evangelist. There is no doubt that the Icon is very ancient and is the work of a great artist, who was a pious and virtuous man. The All-Holy Virgin allows miracles to take place through various holy Icons of Hers in different places for those who draw near with faith.

The Icon itself, about 33 x 26 inches in size, is unfortunately covered with gold-plated silver plaques on which the goldsmith impressed prints of some kind of money, most likely of his time; at the bot-

tom of these he added two hands, artistically wrought of gold-plated silver, with which the pictured Mother of God holds the Infant Jesus.

The halo encircling the head of the All-Holy Mother of God bears four carved seals, on two of which the Virgin is shown, and on the other two St. George or St. Theodore and St. Luke the Evangelist. On the upper part near the top of the halo, the Holy Mother of God is represented full stature, Her hands raised. This halo and that of the Infant were decorated with eleven large red and green stones of great value, one of which has since disappeared. At the bottom is found the year of the gold-plating: 1732. The Icon is covered with votive tokens of all kinds, each of them commemorating a particular miracle.

Copy of the Diasozousa Icon in Tallahassee, Fla.

The church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God is located on the south side of the Holy Monastery of St. John the Theologian on Patmos, from which it is separated only by several steps. It is small and artistically constructed in a simple Byzantine style, and it appears amidst a beautiful garden of fragrant flowering and fruit-bearing trees. The exact year of its foundation is unknown, but certain deeds of ownership indicate that it was before 1500. In 1911 the church was deeded to the Holy Monastery of St. John the Theologian and has been its property ever since. The miraculous Icon is located on a column opposite the Bishop's Throne.

MIRACLES

The frequent miracles of the Most Holy Mother of God performed throughout the centuries through this Sacred Icon are very numerous and of many kinds, and it would take perhaps a whole series of volumes to include all of them. We shall cite here only a few of them for the benefit of pious people, with the belief that they will prove capable of strengthening faith in Almighty God and perpetuating the reverence and piety of new generations toward the All-glorious Mother of the Lord, the Mother of all Christians. Indeed, the Holy Virgin Herself, immediately after Her Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel, prophesied, saying: *Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call Me blessed* (Luke 1:48).

I

In 1732, when Algerian pirates were roaming the Mediterranean and the islands of the Ægean Sea, a Patmian man by the name of Glyconiketas was robbed and captured by pirates on the shore of Patmos,

where he had come to fish. He was taken to North Africa and imprisoned in a jail in Tripoli. The prisoner pleaded every hour for the help of God and for the intercessions of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God, Whose church was located near his home.

Three years later, when his unfortunate wife was holding the 3-year memorial service for her husband, whom she believed killed, a tall and reverent-looking Woman appeared to Glykoniketas in his jail cell and asked him to follow Her. Being chained, he was unable to stand up and he asked Her Who She was. She replied that She was the One known to him as the *Diasozousa*. Before the Most Holy Mother of God had finished Her answer, Glyconiketas found himself suddenly delivered from bondage and in some incomprehensible way transported to that very port of Patmos where he had been fishing three years earlier. His wife, naturally disbelieving what had happened, refused at first to allow him into the house! He, however, mentioned things and events concerning his household and thus was able to persuade her. Then, in order to confer a token of thanksgiving to the Mother of God, Who had saved him, he took his wife's silver utensils and covered the venerable Icon of the *Diasozouza* with silver plate. Returning from the goldsmith's with the already silver-plated Icon to place it in the church, he found some gold coins on the road, with which he then gold-plated the Holy Icon, trusting this to be the wish of the Most Holy Mother of God.

II

During November of 1888, as the result of great worries a woman of Patmos became ill with aphylaxy (a skin rash on the entire body) and suffered a great deal. The sick woman asked the Virgin to intercede for her. When one morning her mother returned from the church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God after the Divine Liturgy and gave her a piece of antidoron, she said that she had already had some, and that a Woman had visited her during sleep and blessed all her ailing members with a large cross in such a way that she felt real freshness on all her body. The unknown visitor had said to the sick woman: "For you especially I came out of My home, and I am also going to the home of the old woman N. To know Who I am, watch to see upon My return to My home where I shall establish Myself." Indeed, as the healed woman repeatedly narrated to us amidst her tears, the Woman Who had appeared to her was the very Mother of God, Who, upon returning to the church of the *Diasozousa*, entered the sanctuary and reclaimed Her habitual position on the iconostasion.

III

During August of 1905, a woman of Patmian descent who was residing in Ismaelia, Egypt, fell very ill. Her Arab physician confirmed a serious typhoid fever. The sick woman often pleaded to the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God for help, promising her finger-ring to the Icon. One night during sleep she saw a Lady dressed in black standing at the door of the church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God in Patmos, calling her by name. To the repeated questions of the Lady, the sick woman delayed answering and somehow feigned ignorance concerning the identity of her visitor, Who then told her: "You know Me well, because you often pray to Me; therefore, I inform you that from now on you will not see anything bad." And immediately she woke up completely recovered.

In the morning, the Arab physician visited his patient and was amazed to find her well, insisting strongly that she was not the same woman he had visited the day before, and construed her as being a fraud. The husband of the patient tried in vain to reassure the physician and was compelled by him to sign a written declaration that the woman who had been examined on the previous day in her illness as well as on the following day in the recovery of her health was his very own wife and not any other woman, as her non-Christian physician was wrongly insisting, not knowing the power of God.

IV

A woman in Egypt had three children, of whom two had died a few years after birth. When the third one became ill and was in danger of following the path of his two brothers, his mother and his grandmother in tears begged the Holy Virgin to save him. The child immediately recovered from the agony of death and began to speak to his mother, saying, "Mother, did you see Her?" "Whom, my child?" "That Woman Who came just now, and told me that I would become well as soon as She would put Her hand on my forehead. She is the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God from Patmos." He had indeed escaped from the danger of death and was completely healed by the miraculous intervention of the All-Holy Mother of God and by the deep faith in God of the members of his family. A characteristic incident connected with this miracle was this: a draft of air preceded the apparition of the Virgin Mary and was felt by the grandmother of the child as it was filling the room, without her knowing from where and why it was coming in.

After the recovery of the sick child, as was to be expected, there followed donations and votive takens to the Icon of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God as an indication of the gratitude of the parents to the Virgin Who had interceded for their child's healing.

V

In America a little girl, whose parents were natives of Patmos, became seriously ill. The physician confirmed an illness that would require immediate surgery Facing such a danger, the sick child's parents and relatives through fervent prayers asked the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God for the recovery of the child's health. Suddenly the little girl awoke from her deep sleep and said to her mother: "I see a Woman Who has come to make me well: now She is walking; She is going out; don't you see Her?" And the sick little girl was immediately healed and from that time did not return to the physician.

VI

A teacher in Patmos suffered from an ailment of the eyes and was cured by the intercessions of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God due to the following dream. There appeared to him a Woman Who, as She assured him of the quick healing of his eyes, guided him toward the gates of the Church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God. "I live here," She said: "try to come to meet Me. I heard your litanies and your prayers, which are the result of your great faith." The frightened teacher awoke completely well and in the morning narrated this lively dream to his colleagues and acquaintances. When he came to the church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God, he recognized the entrance of the church to which he had been guided during sleep by the Most Holy Mother of God, and he marvelled at the might of God and of His saints. For the entire duration of the Divine Liturgy the teacher was seen kneeling and praying before the Icon of the Virgin.

VII

In the middle of October, 1926, Mrs. S. P. of Patmos gave birth to a daughter under very inauspicious conditions, as she was stricken by a puerperal fever to such a degree that two physicians, despite intensive efforts, were unsuccessful in dissipating the danger. Realizing her hopeless situation, her relatives were compelled to call for another physician from a nearby island who was renowned for his scientific knowledge, but he was also unable to help in any way. Many days went by without any definite results, and the family of the stricken woman was in real despair. One day the woman, despite her fever and exhaustion, called her sister and with great difficulty told her that during sleep she had found herself in front of the outside doors of the church of the Holy

Diasozousa Mother of God, without, however, being able to enter. With the approval of the sick woman, they immediately notified the priest of the church, who brought the Holy *Diasozousa* Icon and, after making the Sign of the Cross over the sick woman, read the Service of the Paracletic Canon of the Virgin Mary. He then left the Icon in the house for the entire day at the request of her people who fervently prayed to the All-Holy Mother of God to perform a miracle for the sick person. The Blessed Virgin Mary indeed performed a miracle on the same day, and the sick woman took a turn towards recovery. Unable to explain otherwise the sudden change in her condition, the physicians also confirmed the miracle, praising the Lord and His All-Holy Mother.

VIII

Some 25 years ago (1930), the husband of a woman in Piraeus suffered from rheumatism, which resulted in his lying motionless in bed. All the drugs then known were used without the slightest improvement in his condition. At the suggestion of a Patmian neighbor of theirs in Piraeus, they asked for some oil from the vigil lamp of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God, and after the first anointment the pains lessened and the man began to move a little, and gradually his health was completely restored. As a token of appreciation to the Holy Theotokos, healer of ailments, the healed man sent sacred objects to the church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God in Patmos.

IX

Several months after the military catastrophe of 1922 in Asia Minor, a woman arrived in Patmos, came to the church of the Holy *Diasozousa* Mother of God, and applied a dozen silver votive tokens to the Holy Icon, each representing a soldier. The woman hung these votive tokens on the Miraculous Icon with great respect and warm expressions of gratitude. She also donated a large quantity of silver brocade material. After the celebration of the Holy Unction on Passion Wednesday, people in attendance questioned the woman on her gift, and she replied that the twelve votive tokens represented men who, finding themselves before an impasse during the retreat of the Greek Army from Asia Minor, pleaded with the "Champion General" (as the Mother of God is called in the Akathist Hymn) with faith and that, appearing to them, She had encouraged them, delivered them from danger, and told them that She was named the *Diasozousa*. Because of this miracle, the soldiers paid all expenses to send the woman to Patmos in order to pray for them and offer their dedications.

SAINT JOHN CASSIAN THE ROMAN

360 - 435

Commemorated February 29

LET US LEAP FOR JOY, O men, spiritually jubilant,* made merry now by commemoration of Cassian;* let us sing to God in praise of the wondrous one among the saints,* who sanctifies those who venerate him with faith.*

The Life of

ST. JOHN CASSIAN THE ROMAN

By Prof. I. M. KONTZEVICH

ST. JOHN CASSIAN THE ROMAN was born, most likely, in Gaul (present-day France), about 357-360 A. D., near the present Marseilles, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. He calls his homeland a country rich and pleasant in the produce of the earth, such as the region of Provence is even today, where a marvellous climate is united to the fertility of the earth. He was the son of wealthy and eminent parents and received a good education. Marseilles at that time gloried in a flourishing of secular sciences, and it is known from history that Romans even travelled to the school of Marseilles instead of to the East for education.

John Cassian loved from his youth the God-pleasing life, and, burning with a desire to attain perfection in it, he went to the East, where he entered a monastery in Bethlehem and became a monk. Having heard of the ascetic life of the Egyptian Fathers, he wished to see them and learn from them. For this purpose he made an agreement with his friend Germanus, and they went to Egypt about the year 390, after he had been two years in the monastery at Bethlehem.

They spent seven whole years in Egypt, living in monasteries as well as among anchorites in solitude. They noted everything, and actually passed through and came to know in detail the life there in all its aspects, bearing all the sorrows and difficulties of the anchoretic life and "even the terrors of this utter desert," as St. John Cassian himself expressed it. In this fashion they spent some time in the Thebaid, and then in the desert of Scetis, near Lake Mareotis in Egypt.

And thus, through seven years of personal experience they so zealously assimilated in every way the spiritual wisdom of the traditions of the ancient ascetic Fathers that it was only in consequence of a vow

they had given that they returned to the monastery in Bethlehem (in 397). But in the same year they again set out for the same Egyptian desert lands and remained there until the year 400.

Leaving Egypt this time for good, St. Cassian and his friend went to Constantinople, where they were favorably received by St. John Chrysostom, who ordained St. Cassian deacon and his friend, as the elder of the two, priest. St. Cassian was later ordained priest, either in Rome or in Marseilles.

His residence in the capital enriched the already exceptionally extensive and many-sided knowledge of John Cassian, and his Orthodox religious world-view found its definitive forms and received its final polishing. St. John Chrysostom without question was the chief instrument in this. In his person St. Cassian had not only an educated and extraordinarily gifted teacher, but, further, in St. Chrysostom's personal life St. Cassian saw the actualization of the great testament of the Egyptian anchorites whose teaching on spiritual perfection he had absorbed during his residence in their midst.

When St. Chrysostom was sentenced to banishment, those devoted to him sent in 405 several mediators to Pope Innocent in Rome; among them were St. Cassian and his friend. But this embassy produced no results.

After this St. Cassian returned to his homeland and there continued his life according to the models of the Egyptian ascetics. He soon became renowned for his holiness. Disciples one after another began to flock to him, and soon he founded a monastery for them. Following this example, a women's monastery was also established nearby. In both monasteries the rule was introduced according to which monks lived and were saved in the Eastern and especially the Egyptian monasteries.

The good order of these monasteries and the evident success of the brethren laboring there in asceticism attracted the attention of the hierarchs and superiors of monasteries in the region of Gaul. Desiring to introduce such order into their own institutions, they begged St. Cassian to write for them the monastic rules with a description also of the very spirit of Eastern asceticism. He willingly fulfilled this desire, describing everything in twelve books of *Institutions* and twenty-four *Conferences*. Parts of these *Conferences* are included in the *Philokalia* under the title: "An Examination of the Spiritual Warfare."

"All sciences and arts," he writes, "have their goal and their end, in view of which the connoisseur and lover of art will gladly bear all

labors and expense... The end of our ascetic life is the Kingdom of God, and its goal is purity of heart, without which it is not possible to attain the end. To this goal our glance is chained, and to it we must direct our truest course, as by a straight line. But if our thought, even by a little, should incline away from it, we must immediately return to contemplation of it and correct our thought, as by a norm."

In this "spiritual warfare" St. Cassian establishes a genetic link between the passions, of which the eight chief ones have the following sequence: gluttony is followed by fornication, then by covetousness, anger, dejection, despondency (accidie), vainglory, and pride.

St. John Cassian may justly be numbered among the first founders of monasticism in the West. For the exemplary good order of his monasteries he received the honorary title of *Abbat*, which corresponds to the Eastern *Abba*, which is applied to the eldest and most perfect men.

St. John Cassian died in 435. He was canonized in the East, and monasteries have been dedicated in his honor. Although he was never canonized in the West, Pope Urban V (1362-70), Pope in Avignon (and former Abbot of St. Victor's in Marseilles), ordered the head of St. John Cassian to be placed in a silver chest and the inscription made: "Head of Saint Cassian."

AS FOR THE WORKS of St. Cassian, there is expressed in them the whole exceptional breadth and many-sidedness of his education and development. He received in his homeland, Marseilles, a brilliant secular classical education. In the East, both in Constantinople and in the desert, he assimilated not only the wisdom of the Eastern holy Fathers and ascetics, but also learned through experience the "science of sciences": the path to perfection and the laws of the unseen warfare. Then, having returned to the West, he became acquainted with the leaders of Western thought, such as Blessed Augustine and St. Ambrose of Milan.

In the dispute of Blessed Augustine with Pelagius[1] he took a quite special position, for he approached this question not on the basis of abstract reasoning, but as one who had attained in his personal experience the whole meaning that grace has in the work of the soul's salvation. He writes: "Salvation without human efforts is something incomprehensible. But it is also impossible to attain it by these efforts alone without Divine grace." At the same time he notes that: "Grace may be far less adequately defended by pompous words and verbose controversies, by dialectic syllogisms and the eloquence of Cicero [here he means Augustine], than by the examples of the Egyptian ascetics."

1. Pelagius taught that man may attain salvation by his own will without the aid of grace; Augustine, in opposing this heresy, taught the indispensibility of Divine grace in the soul's salvation, but went to the opposite extreme of virtually denying man's free will (*tr. note*).

In order to explain the working of grace, he starts with the correct conception of the will, with an examination of those inner laws of the soul according to which all processes of the will proceed. The first link in every process of the will is *desire*, which can pass under a particular motivation into *resolve* to fulfill the desire.

And although in the work of salvation the beginning of a good desire may belong to human freedom, still to it must be joined grace, as a power working within, and under its cooperation a man's good desires or a good act of the will come to fulfillment.

Both any good activity and faith are possible only with the cooperation of grace, and without it they are impossible, for after the fall of Adam nature was impaired and struck with weakness. Thus the grace-giving help of God is absolutely indispensable in the spiritual and moral growth of a man, and in all stages this growth belongs not to the efforts of man, but to grace. But at the same time human efforts also are an indispensable condition for the drawing down of grace.

IN HIS PERSONAL LIFE and in his literary works St. John Cassian remains exclusively an ascetic. This is the basic tenor of his whole life and activity. His significance in the development of Western monasticism was very great.[1] Western monasticism, having received its foundation from the Eastern ascetics, was living until this time on what came to it by chance from the East. Now, however, St. John Cassian in his works gave the West the full experience of asceticism in the spirit of the views and attainments of the Eastern ascetics. In them St. Cassian defines the very aim and the final goal of Christian asceticism and describes its whole process, leading the ascetic to the moment when he renounces everything earthly and lives purely by the contemplation of God.

In the light of Divine revelation, through a primarily psychological analysis of the conditions which the ascetic must undergo, St. John Cassian familiarizes the reader with every manifestation in the sphere of the spiritual life of a man being saved. He examines the condition and disposition of the powers of the soul in the natural, sinful man, as well as the form in which the life of the man of flesh usually manifests itself; then, as the *Conferences* progress, he makes known the condition and disposition of these natural human powers in various stages of spiritual life, and he shows likewise the manifestations of the spiritual life by which the life of the ascetic is chiefly characterized in various stages of spiritual perfection.

Together with subjects concerning the sphere of the ascetic life, St. John Cassian in his *Conferences* touches also on more general basic points

1. See article below, p. 57.

of the Christian world view, so that the ascetic, through a true understanding of them, might more clearly and correctly understand the aim of his life and feel firm ground under him.

Atrium (Entrance) of the ancient Basilica of St. Cassian's Monastery of St. Victor. The Basilica dates from the time of St. Cassian

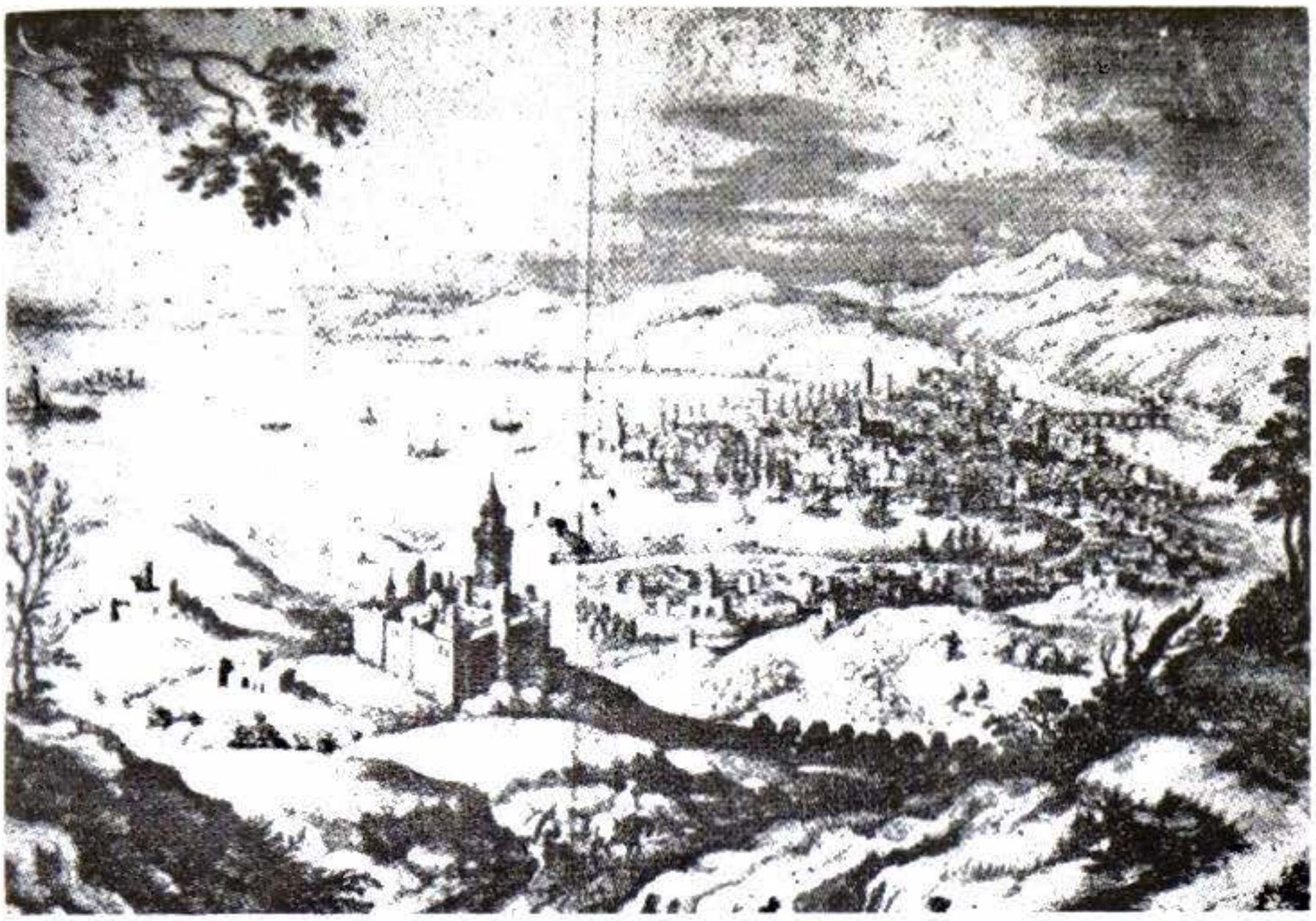
THE WHOLE of subsequent Western monasticism lived on the heritage of St. John Cassian, and the West was never able subsequently to produce anything equal to his works in the sphere of asceticism. But in the East also, in the seed-bed and flower-garden of monasticism, the works of John Cassian enjoyed immense respect for the exalted ascetic views set forth in them, and they were very early translated into Greek. St. John Climacus in the 6th century speaks of his works with praise: "Great Cassian reasons surpassingly and exaltedly"; and Patriarch St. Photius in his thousand-volume library testifies that his works are "something divine in nature."

The works of St. Cassian are three in number:

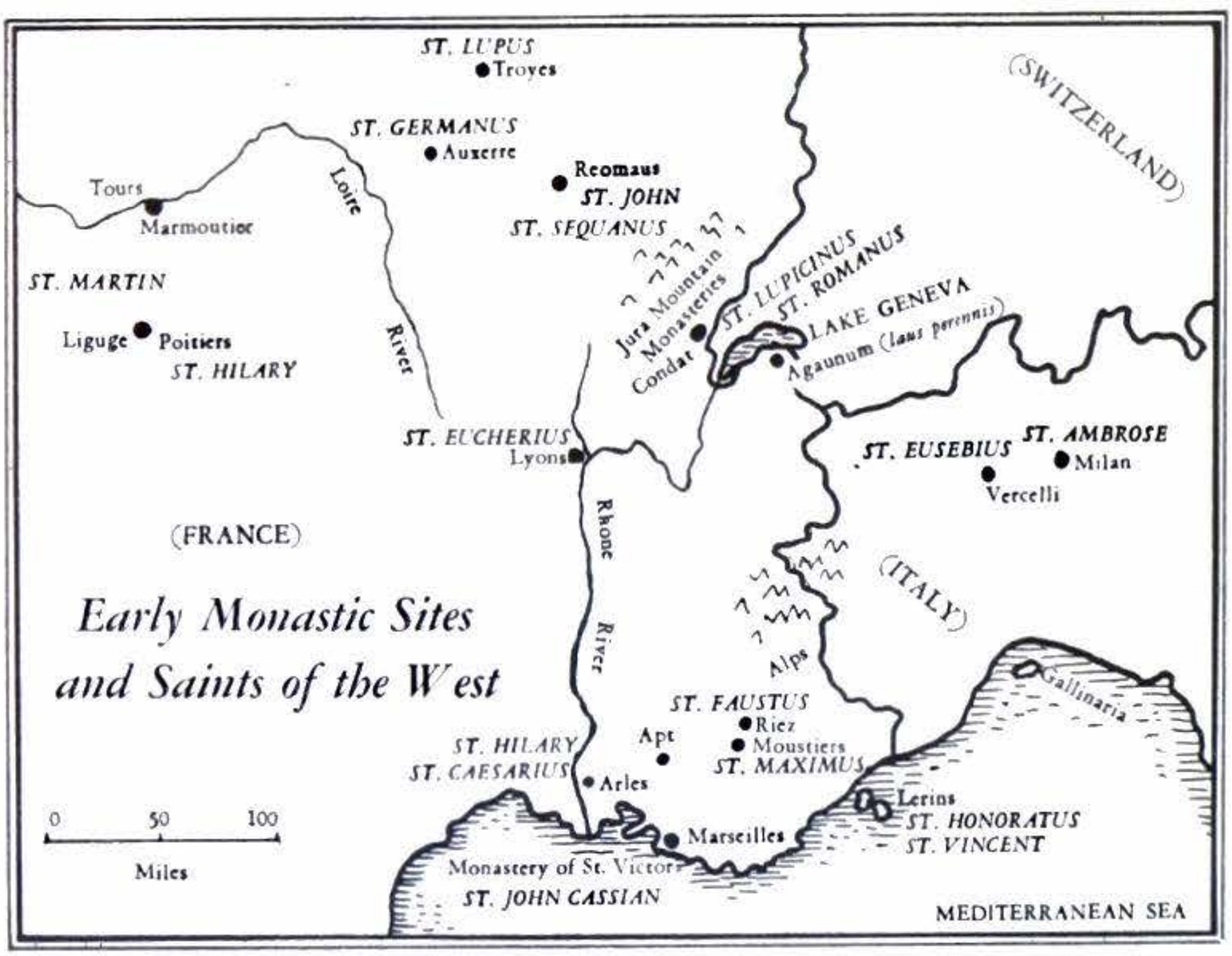
The Institutes of the Monasteries (*De Institutis Coenobiorum*) in twelve books. The first book discusses the outward appearance of the monks, *i.e.*, their dress; the second, the system of nocturnal psalmody and prayers; the third, the daily prayers; the fourth, renunciation of the world. The remaining eight books discuss the eight chief sins.

Twenty-four *Conferences* (*Collationes*), wherein are given talks of anchoretic fathers on various spiritual subjects. In the thirteenth Conference the dispute between Pelagius and Blessed Augustine on freedom of the will is examined.

Seven books *On the Incarnation of the Lord against Nestorius* (*De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium*). This was written in 430, when St. Cyril of Alexandria in his battle with Nestorius appealed for support to Pope Celestine. The examination of the question was entrusted to the priest of Marseilles John Cassian, as one who knew the East. His conclusion regarding Nestorius was very harsh. The support shown to St. Cyril by the Papal legates at the Council of Ephesus (451) had great significance. The victory gained by St. Cyril was the triumph of the true veneration of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.



St. Cassian's Monastery of St. Victor,
overlooking the Port of Marseilles (1655)



ST. JOHN CASSIAN

AND THE FOUNDATION OF ORTHODOX MONASTICISM IN THE WEST

The late Archbishop John Maximovitch of blessed memory, himself an active missionary in Western lands, showed a keen interest in the pre-schism saints of the West. This article, inspired by him, is offered in the spirit of the testament he has bequeathed to Western Orthodoxy.

THE BIRTH OF MONASTICISM in Egypt in the 4th century was destined very soon to inspire and transform the whole Christian world. The Orthodox believer is aware of the existence of an unbroken tradition of monasticism that extends from that day to this; he recognizes in the living fathers of Russian, Greek, and other Orthodox monasteries today representatives of the spirituality of the Egyptian desert, in a form very little changed in 1600 years. He himself participates, as far as his condition permits, in their way of life, following basically the same rule of daily prayers, of Church services, of fasting, of spiritual reading, all of which have changed in no essential respect in those 16 centuries. For the Church of Christ has ever acknowledged the monastic life to be not merely a special vocation for a few, but rather the Christian life *par excellence*, a model and a standard for all Christians.

It has not been so in the West. Here the rule, back at least as far as the schism of the Church of Rome, has been rather one of constant change, of new "orders" and "reforms," of changing fashions in spiritual literature and practice and even in dogma, until now the once glorious and Orthodox Church of Rome finds itself reduced to a state of near anarchy and can present to the world no single individual or institution that any Father of the Church, East or West, could recognize as strictly Christian. This is the result of nine centuries and more of schism and heresy, of proud error allowed to reduce itself to a mockery of the truth.

As a result, the West has lost what she once possessed: her very Christian Fathers. Their lives have been deformed and obscured by her rationalist scholars; devotion to them has all but died out; their miracles have almost ceased; they are not glorified either in iconography or in the Church's song of praise -- for even her monasteries have only faint echoes of the genuine Orthodox services to the saints.

(Continued on page 63)

ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV
1759 - 1833

KONTAKION, TONE 2

HAVING LEFT THE BEAUTY OF THE WORLD and what is corrupt in it, O Saint,* Thou didst settle in the Wilderness of Sarov.* And having lived there an angelic life,* Thou wast for many the way to salvation.* Therefore Christ golryfied thee, Father Seraphim,* and enriched thee with the gift of healing and miracles.* And so we cry to thee:* Rejoice, Seraphim, our holy Father.*

THE SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO LAYMEN AND MONKS

Of Our Father Among the Saints
ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV

XXXVII

SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE one should adorn oneself with silence; for St. Ambrose of Milan says: I have seen many being saved by silence, but not one by talkativeness. And again one of the Fathers says that silence is the mystery of the future age, while words are the implement of this world (St. Isaac the Syrian).

Only sit in your cell in heedfulness and silence, and by every means strive to draw near to the Lord, and the Lord is ready to transform you from a man into an angel, *and to whom*, He says, *will I look, but to him that is meek and silent, and that trembleth at My words?* (Is. 66: 2.)

When we remain in silence, our enemy the devil will have no success with regard to a man with a hidden heart; this, however, must be understood of silence in the mind.

One who goes through such an ascetic endeavor should place all his hope on the Lord God, in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle: *Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you* (I Peter 5: 7).

Such a one should be constant in this ascetic endeavor, following in this case the example of St. John the Silent One and Anchorite (Lives of Saints, Dec. 3), who in the traversing of this path strengthened himself with these divine words: *I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee* (Hebr. 13: 5).

If one cannot always remain in solitude and silence while living in a monastery and occupying oneself with the obediences placed upon one by the superior, then at least a little time that is left after obediences should be devoted to solitude and silence, and for this little the Lord God will not neglect to send down His grace-giving mercy.

From solitude and silence are born tender contrition* and meekness; the activity of this latter in the human heart may be compared to that quiet water of Siloe, which flows without noise or sound, as the Prophet Isaiah speaks of it: *the waters of Siloe that go softly* (Is. 8:6).

Remaining in one's cell in silence, work, prayer, and instruction day and night in God's law, makes a man pious; for, in the words of the Holy Fathers, the cell of a monk is the Babylonian furnace, and in it the three youths found the Son of God (St. Peter of Damascus, *Philokalia*).

XXXVIII

ABSOLUTE SILENCE

ABSOLUTE SILENCE is a cross upon which a man must crucify himself with all the passions and desires. But only think, how much our Master Christ suffered beforehand slanders and offenses, and only then ascended the Cross.

Thus we too cannot enter into absolute silence and hope for holy perfection if we do not suffer with Christ. For, says the Apostle, *If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him* (Rom. 8:17). There is no other path (St. Barsanophius, Answer 342).

He who has entered into silence must unfailingly keep in mind why he has done so, in order that his heart may not be turned away to something else.

XXXIX

THE ACTIVE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

MAN IS COMPOSED of soul and body, and therefore his life's path also should consist of activities of the body and of the soul -- of action and mental contemplation.

The path of the active life consists of: fasting, continence, vigils, prostrations, prayer and other bodily ascetic labors, which comprise the narrow and grievous path which, according to God's word, leads to eternal life (St. Matt. 7:14).

* *umileniye*

The path of the contemplative life consists of the elevation of the mind to the Lord God, of heartfelt heedfulness, mental prayer, and, through such practices, contemplation of spiritual things.

Everyone who desires to traverse the spiritual life must begin with the active life, and only then come to the contemplative: for without the active life it is impossible to enter the contemplative.

The active life serves to cleanse us of sinful passions, and it leads us up to the stage of active perfection; and by this very means it paves for us the path to the contemplative life. For only those who have been cleansed of passions and are perfect can approach that life, as one may see from the words of Holy Scripture: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* (St. Matt. 5:8), and from the words of St. Gregory the Theologian (in his sermon for Holy Pascha): Only those most perfect by their experience approach without danger to contemplation.

One should approach the contemplative life with fear and trembling, with contrition of heart and humility, with much experience of the Holy Scriptures, and, if one can find him, under the direction of some experienced elder; and not with audacity and self-esteem. For he who is audacious and disdainful, in the words of St. Gregory the Sinaite (*Philokalia*), having sought with pride for something beyond his worth, is compelled to be ready for it prematurely. And again: If anyone imagines in conceit to attain something high, this is a satanic desire, and, without acquiring truth, he will be handily seized by the devil with his nets, as his servant.

But if one cannot find an instructor able to direct one into the contemplative life, in this case one must be directed by the Holy Scripture, for the Lord Himself commands us to learn from Holy Scripture, saying: *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life* (St. John 5:39).

Likewise one must endeavor to read through the writings of the Fathers, and strive as much as possible, according to one's strength, to fulfill what they teach, and in this fashion, little by little ascend from the active life to the perfection of the contemplative.

For in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian (Sermon on Holy Pascha), it is the very best deed when we each attain perfection ourselves and offer to God Who calls us a sacrifice living, holy, and always and in everything being sanctified.

A man must not leave the active life even when he may have had success in it and have already entered the contemplative life: for it co-operates with the contemplative life and elevates it.

Traversing the path of the interior and contemplative life, one must not relax and leave it because people, having become attached to exterior and sensual things, strike us a blow in the very heart's feeling by the opposition of their opinions, and strive by every means to turn us aside from the traversing of the interior path, placing in our path various obstacles; for, in the opinion of the teachers of the Church (Blessed Theodoret, Commentary on the Song of Songs), the contemplation of spiritual things is preferred to the knowledge of sensual things.

And therefore one must not waver over any obstacles to the traversing of this path, strengthening oneself in this case with the word of God: *But let us fear not their fear, neither let us be dismayed: for God is with us. Let us sanctify the Lord God Himself in heartfelt remembrance of His Divine name and fulfillment of His will, and He shall be our fear* (Is. 8 :12, 13).

ST. JOHN CASSIAN

(continued from p. 57)

But the saints are alive in God, as well as in the faithful. And if the West demonstrates impiety for her own saints, no Orthodox believer will do so. Now that the light of Orthodoxy has begun to shine once more in the West, it is to be expected that the saints of the West will be -- not merely "rediscovered" -- but *reglorified* as befits their heavenly station.

AS CHRISTIANY ITSELF came (and is even now returning) to the West from the East, so was it also with monasticism. And more than to any other individual, it was to St. John Cassian that the West owed her knowledge of Orthodox monasticism, and it was under his instruction that she received monastic spirituality. Orthodox believers are perhaps scarcely aware that there existed in the West, largely through his mediation, a genuine Orthodox monasticism based on the Egyptian Fathers, which produced a multitude of saints, many of whom were so outstanding that their renown passed early to the East and they are numbered in the calendars of the Eastern churches.

It was *St. Athanasius the Great*, Archbishop of Alexandria, who first aroused widespread enthusiasm in the West for the monastic life. Exiled by Arians several times to the West (to Treves in northern Gaul in 335, to Rome in 341), he brought with him to Rome two Eastern monks, Ammonius and Isidore, and spread the first report in Rome of the Egyptian Desert Fathers, in particular St. Anthony, whose *Life* he was later to write. Soon monasteries for men and women were springing up in Rome and all of Italy, attracting in particular the rich and nobly born. Many bishops became patrons of monasticism. *ST. EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI* (283-371), who had himself been in the Egyptian Thebaid and had been exiled back to the West by the Arians, founded what was perhaps the first monastery as such in the West (in 345) at the foot of the Alps and gave over to the monks of his diocese the care of worship in his cathedral. *ST. PAULINUS OF NOLA* (353-431), a Roman consul, gave away most of his immense wealth and left the world to settle at Nola in Campania, where he formed a monastic community of the many who joined him. *ST. AMBROSE* (340-397) in Milan, and *BLESSED AUGUSTINE* (354-430) in North Africa, wrote in praise of monasticism and founded monastic communities.

Many Christians of the West, especially in the years before and after 400 A.D., went to see for themselves the monastic centers of the East, and some of them remained in the East. Chief of these was *Blessed Jerome* (340-420), who spent the last 35 years of his life in a monastery

in Bethlehem. His letters to the West increased the interest in monasticism there and drew yet others to the East, among them the noble ladies of Rome, *Sts. Paula, Melania, and Marcella*, who themselves founded monastic communities in the Holy Land. The priest *Rufinus of Aquileia* spent six years in Egypt and wrote a *History of the Monks of Egypt*, returning to the West after living for 20 years in Jerusalem in a monastery he founded.

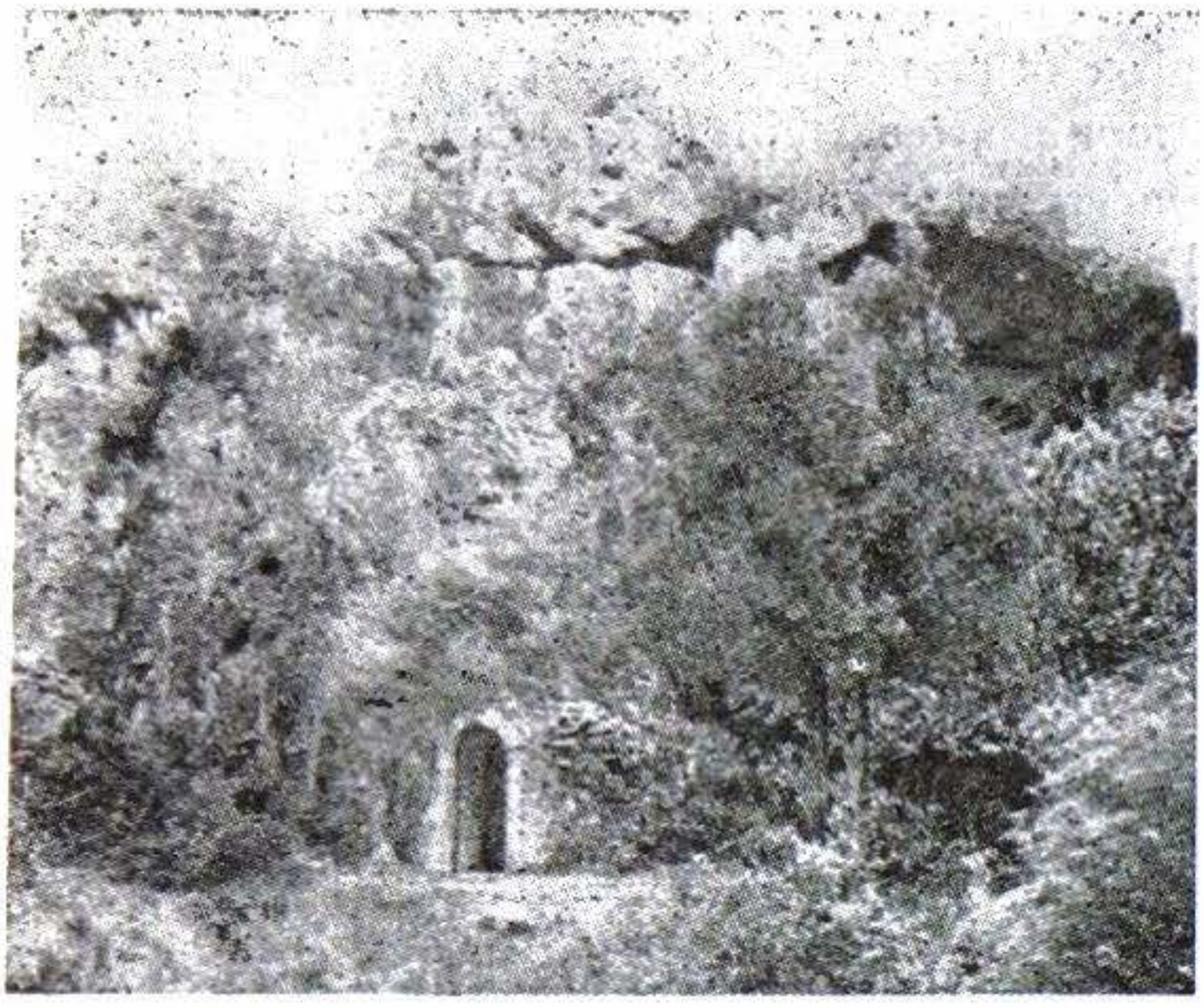
BUT IT WAS in Gaul, present-day France, that the seed of Eastern monasticism was to produce its first and richest fruits in the West. The first great figure in the indigenous, strictly Orthodox monasticism of Gaul was *ST. MARTIN OF TOURS* (316-397), at first a disciple of *ST. HILARY OF POITIERS* (d. 368), who himself doubtless learned much about Eastern monasticism during his exile in Asia Minor (356-9). During his teacher's exile St. Martin, who from his youth had shown an inclination for the life of Christian perfection but had been forced to serve many years as a soldier, lived the life of an anchorite on the island of Gallinaria off the coast of Genoa, subsisting on roots which he gathered. He returned with St. Hilary to Poitiers and in 360 founded, just outside that city, the first monastery in Gaul, known by the name of *Liguge*. His holy life there attracted widespread attention, and popular demand obliged him, against his will, to accept the duties of Bishop of Tours. Here he did not at all change his monastic inclination, but retaining, as his biographer notes, "the same humility in his heart and the same homeliness in his garments" (his enemies, indeed, found his countenance so despicable, his clothing so mean, his hair so disgusting that they considered him totally unworthy of the episcopacy), he founded a new monastery in 372, called *Marmoutier*, two miles outside the city, where he retired to enjoy "the solitude of a hermit." The description of his monastery which his disciple Sulpitius Severus gives in his *Life of St. Martin* reveals it to have far more kinship with the remote semi-eremitic *lauras* of the East than with the great Abbeys of medieval Europe. "On one side, it was surrounded by a precipitous rock of a lofty mountain, while the river Loire had shut in the rest of the plain by a bay extending back for a little distance; and the place could be approached only by one, and that a very narrow passage. Here he possessed a cell constructed of wood. Many also of the brethren had, in the same manner, fashioned retreats for themselves, but most of them had formed these out of the rock of the overhanging mountain hollowed out into caves. There were altogether 80 disciples, who were being disciplined after the example of the saintly master... No art was practiced there, except that of copying, and even this was assigned to the brethren of younger years, while the elders spent

their time in prayer. Barely did any one of them go beyond the cell, unless when they assembled at the place of prayer..." So great was St. Martin's influence in Gaul that 2000 monks attended his funeral. His *Life* reveals him to be indeed a great wonderworker and holy archpastor in the full tradition of the Orthodox East. All the modern translators of the *Life* are bewildered, significantly, at the great "puzzle" of Sulpitius Severus -- how a man so truthful and sincere could write a *Life* full of such incredible miracles. Here is revealed the abyss that truly separates the "Christians" of the West from Orthodoxy and from the saints of their own heritage. Such saints lived and still live, and their miracles are true; but the West has stepped away from them.

St. Martin's disciples founded monasteries throughout Gaul, but as yet the only rule that governed them was the example of the individual elder, together with what could be learned of the life of the Eastern monasteries. It became the task of St. John Cassian, who returned to Gaul within fifteen years of St. Martin's death, to describe this rule as well as the spiritual foundation of monasticism, by writing down what he had learned from the Egyptian Fathers.

The two monastic works of St. Cassian were written precisely at the demand of the abbots and founders of monasteries at his time. The *Institutes* were written (in 425) for Castor, Bishop of Apt, some 40 miles north of Marseilles, who wished to establish a monastery in his diocese on the basis of the institutes of the East. The *Conferences* were written in three parts, between 426 and 428, and were dedicated to various bishops, priests, and monks in southern Gaul and on the islands off the coast where groups of monks were just then settling; they were intended to give guidance in the monastic life, "which," St. Cassian noted, "is difficult and almost unknown in this country." So great was the prestige of St. Cassian, based on his holiness, his knowledge of Eastern monasticism, and the good order of his monasteries, that he was immediately looked to as an authority by a great part of monastic Gaul, and as one capable of teaching the best sons of Western monasticism.

ONE OF THE CHIEF instruments in spreading the rule and teaching of St. Cassian throughout Gaul was the island monastery of *Lerins* (see cover), to the founder of which, St. Honoratus, and his disciple, St. Eucherius, he dedicated Part II of his *Conferences*. The islands of Lerins lie two or three miles off the coast of Cannes. The chief of them, now known by the name of St. Honoratus, is no more than a half-mile long and a quarter-mile wide, and was in the 5th century deserted and



The first hermitage of St. Honoratus: Grotto at Sainte Baume in the mountains of the Esterels near Cannes

covered with ruins, uninhabited because of its poisonous serpents. *ST. HONORATUS* (356-430), as we learn from the biography by his disciple, St. Hilary of Arles, was born in a noble but pagan family and accepted Christian baptism against his father's will. He early became "consumed with a yearning for the desert," and, desiring to flee to the East, he got no farther than Greece before he returned to find a Western desert, becoming a hermit first on the Mediterranean coast (*illustration at left*), and then on the nearby island of Lerins, where he was soon joined by numerous disciples, for whom he founded a monastery about the year 410. A simple church was erected, and the disciples lived in separate cells around the elder's. He was a loving and solicitous father first to his monks, and then to his flock as Archbishop of Arles. St. Cassian wrote to him and to St. Eucherius in his preface: "O holy brothers, your virtues shine upon the world like great beacons; many saints will be formed by your example but will scarcely be able to imitate your perfection." And, indeed, Lerins became a fount of monasticism and a nursery of bishops and saints for all of southern Gaul, being known as a place from whence the pure principles of Egyptian monasticism were disseminated in the West. Among the chief disciples of St. Honoratus and his monastery should be mentioned:

ST. EUCHERIUS (d. 449), later Bishop of Lyons. Of high birth and senatorial rank, he renounced the world and desired to go to Egypt but, on the death of his wife, was satisfied to take his two sons (who both were later to become bishops) with him to the Western desert, Lerins. He wrote several works on the monastic vocation, praising "the holy elders who have brought the Egyptian Fathers to Gaul."

ST. LUPUS (d. 478), Bishop of Troyes. Of noble blood, he married the sister of St. Hilary of Arles, but later separated from her to devote himself to the monastic life at Lerins. Here he spent only one year, then went home to sell his goods and give the money to the poor, when

he was seized by the people and acclaimed bishop of Troyes. He occupied this see for 52 years and was noted for his austere life and strict orthodoxy. He was sent with his uncle, *ST. GERMANUS OF AUXERRE* (380-448) -- who founded monasteries in Auxerre and Wales -- by Pope Celestine to Britain, where he successfully combatted the Pelagians. He stopped Attila at the gates of Troyes just as St. Leo did later before Rome.

ST. VINCENT OF LERINS (d. 450). A leading theologian of the Church of Gaul in the 5th century, he settled in Lerins in order that, "avoiding the concourse and crowds of cities... I can follow without distraction the Psalmist's admonition, *Be still, and know that I am God.*" Here he wrote his celebrated *Commonitorium*, a "Reminder," where he wrote down "those things which I have truthfully received from the holy Fathers," which they "have handed down to us and committed to our keeping." Among these things is the celebrated definition of orthodoxy as *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus:* that which has been believed in the Church "everywhere, always, by everyone." His defense of the traditions of the Fathers and his condemnation of innovation and novelty in the Church (apparently having in mind Augustine's teaching on grace) are as appropriate today as they were in his time.[1]

ST. HILARY OF ARLES (401-449). From a wealthy family, he was called out of the world by St. Honoratus. At the early age of 28 he was called to succeed his elder as Archbishop of Arles. He continued, however, to live as a monk, having a simple cell, traversing his diocese always on foot and without shoes, even in the snow, and displayed zeal for manual labor and great love for the poor. He fell into disgrace by opposing an apparently unjustified Papal interference in the life of the Church of Gaul, but he never lost the respect of the clergy and people of Gaul.

ST. MAXIMUS (388-460), Bishop of Riez. He came to St. Honoratus at the age of 12, and the elder made him his successor as abbot of Lerins. He was a worthy successor, as St. Faustus testifies, for in him "the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, and sweetness and humility tempered the firmness of his rule." The author of his *Life* describes him as "walking all night long through the monastery and its dwellings, seeking the suffering who might need his help." Hearing of his sanctity, the people of Frejus, on the nearby coast, wished to take him by force to be their bishop; but he hid for three days and nights in the forest on the island, until his pursuers left. A short time later, however, the people of Riez succeeded in their similar attempt. He brought with him to Riez some of his monks and founded a monastery at Moustiers. Some grottos which served as cells for his monks still exist on the hill of Moustiers.

1. Cf. Metropolitan Philaret's quotation from the *Commonitorium* below, p. 74.

ST. FAUSTUS (405-493), Bishop of Riez. The successor of St. Maximus both as Abbot of Lerins and Bishop of Riez, he continued to visit Lerins while bishop and led a life of extreme austerity. He wrote works defending the Orthodox doctrine of grace which St. Cassian had set forth, condemning the opposite extremes of Pelagius and Augustine and following the "middle path" which came from the Egyptian Fathers.

ST. CAESARIUS (470-542), Archbishop of Arles From a wealthy family, he abandoned the world in his youth and entered Lerins, where he practiced such austerities (living only on herbs, of which he prepared a week's supply at a time) that his health broke down. He then went to Arles, where he was ordained deacon and then priest and made superior of a monastery, which he made into an exemplary institution according to the rules he had learned in Lerins. Elected Archbishop in 502, he tried to escape consecration by hiding amidst the city's funeral monuments, but once he entered upon his duties he submitted everything and everyone to strict discipline, and himself continued his austere monastic way of life. He concerned himself with the care of the poor and sick, being so generous with his own possessions that he and his household more than once went hungry. For 40 years he was the leading hierarch of southern Gaul. He established monasteries for men and women, writing a strict rule for each -- the latter the first especially written for women -- based on the rule of Lerins; these were promulgated in many other monasteries as well. Appointing his sister Caesaria as abbess, he sent her first for education to St. Cassian's convent in Marseilles.

FROM LERINS in the years of its glory (5th to 6th centuries) came some sixty saints. "Blessed and happy island of Lerins," wrote St. Caesarius, "which, while it seems to be small and flat, is known to have raised to the skies innumerable mountains." Disciples of Lerins spread monasticism throughout Gaul in the 5th and 6th centuries, and in most of these foundations the *Institutes* and *Conferences* of St. Cassian are to be found. Among the leading monasteries of this period were:

The Monasteries of the Jura Mountains. The eastern part of Gaul near the Swiss border became alive with multitudes following the monastic life. *ST. ROMANUS* (d. 460), a native of the province of Sequanaise in the plain below, retired here after spending some time in a monastery near Lyons, where St. Eucherius (ftom Lerins) was bishop, taking with him into the wilderness only a book on the Desert Fathers (probably by St. Cassian), some tools, and vegetable seeds. In the dense mountain forests he found a place enclosed between three steep cliffs at the confluence of two streams. His brother *ST. LUPICINUS* (d. 480) soon joined him and others followed, and a monastery was founded (to be known as

Condat), from which colonies of monks went out as bees from a hive to found others. The two brothers governed the series of monasteries together. On a nearby rock at the edge of a precipice, the sister of the two brothers ruled a convent of 500 nuns, who were never allowed to leave the grounds. The monastic tradition of these monasteries, according to the third abbot, *St. Eugendus*, had its sources in Sts. Basil, Pachomius, Cassian, and the Fathers of Lerins. The monks imitated the Eastern anchorites, whose rules they studied daily, but tempered the Eastern practices in accordance with the different climate and conditions of this region, where there are deep snows in winter and terrible heat in summer. Shoes and garments, as frequently in the monasteries of early Gaul, were of skins. *St. Gregory of Tours*, in his *Life* of the two brothers, presents St. Lupicinus as surpassing all in austerity of life--living in a tree trunk, eating the plainest food without oil or salt, taking food often only once in three days, avoiding all conversations and contacts with women, and being extremely strict with his monks. Romanus, on the other hand, was filled with such simplicity and love that he embraced lepers (his touch healing them) and desired to be buried outside the monastery so that women also could approach his relics.

The Monastery of Reomaus. This, the most ancient monastery in Burgundy, was founded by *ST. JOHN OF REOMAUS* (d. 539). He later fled from his monastery and went to Lerins to live as a simple monk, and when recalled by his bishop he placed his monastery and that of his disciple, *St. Sequanus*, under the rule of St. Macarius, *i.e.*, of Lerins. The asceticism of the Egyptian Fathers was carefully followed, the monks living in cells some distance apart, and specific mention is made in the *Life* of St. Sequanus of the *Institutes* and *Conferences* of St. Cassian.

The Monastery of Agaunum. Located between great rocks at the entrance to the chief pass of the Alps, this monastery was built by the Burgundian King Sigismund after his conversion from Arianism about 515 on the site of a church erected on the spot where St. Maurice and the Theban Legion suffered martyrdom rather than massacre Christians. Settled originally by monks from Condat and Lerins, it became the chief monastic center of Burgundy and was famous especially because it introduced into the West the *laus perennis*, "perpetual praise" -- *i.e.*, unceasing chanting of psalms, with choirs of monks (of whom there were 900 at Agaunum) taking turns; this practice was taken directly from the Monastery of the Acoemetae (the "Unsleeping") in Constantinople, where it had been introduced in the 5th century, and later spread to many monasteries in the West.

THIS BY NO MEANS exhausts the list that could be made of monasteries and monastic saints in 5th and 6th century Gaul; there were hundreds of monasteries, and the whole of this veritable *Thebaid of the Gauls* looked to the East, to the Fathers of the Egyptian Desert, for its model and inspiration. Later, and in other parts of Europe, other forces came into operation that reduced the influence of Eastern monasticism. But for some time the influence of St. Cassian and Eastern monastic spirituality can still be seen. The whole phenomenon of Irish monasticism is a subject in itself; but the fact that St. Patrick spent seven years at Lerins and visited other monasteries in Gaul is already an indication of the spirit that was to influence it. With St. Benedict, too, the tie with St. Cassian and the East is evident.

ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA (480-547), indeed, is an honored Saint of the Orthodox calendar. He was by no means an innovator or reformer, but considered himself to be simply continuing the tradition of the Eastern Fathers. For him the monastic authorities were: "The *Conferences* of the Fathers, their *Institutes* [both by St. Cassian] and *Lives*, and the *Rule* of our Father St. Basil" (*Rule of St. Benedict*, ch. 73). Ch. 42 of St. Benedict's *Rule* prescribes after the evening meal or Vespers the reading of "the *Conferences* or *The Lives of the Fathers.*" All the instructions on prayer in his *Rule* come directly from St. Cassian (Conference IX). A modern Benedictine scholar (Dom Cuthbert Butler) finds that St. Benedict was influenced by no source, outside of Holy Scripture, as much as by the writings of St. Cassian. And, unlike Cassiodorus and others who used St. Cassian's works with caution because of his anti-Augustinian teaching on grace, St. Benedict indicates no reserve whatever with regard to St. Cassian's teaching. The Benedictine Rule is a direct continuation of the monasticism of the Eastern Fathers -- somewhat softened, admittedly, for the weaker temperament of the West.

LATER WESTERN monasticism, however, despite the prestige of St. Benedict, lost contact with its Eastern sources and participated in that spiritual decline that, apparently, began in the Church of the West even before its formal schism. Within a few centuries the face of Western monasticism was changed to such an extent that the earlier monasticism was totally obliterated. One can detect, in fact, even in the early period, indications of an important misunderstanding of Eastern ascetic doctrine.

In Roman Catholic eyes the leaders of the monastic movement in 5th century Gaul stand under the shadow of a "heresy"-- later to be called "Semi-Pelagianism." St. Cassian is regarded as the founder of this

"heresy" and many of the Fathers of Lerins are accused of holding it -- especially St. Vincent of Lerins, St. Hilary of Arles, and St. Faustus of Riez. In Orthodox eyes it is rather these Fathers who transmitted the Orthodox doctrine of Divine grace and man's free will, and it was Blessed Augustine who fell, not perhaps into heresy, but at least into an exaggeration of the doctrine of grace that threatened to negate the whole meaning of human effort and asceticism in the path of salvation. Archbp. Philaret of Chernigov (*Historical Teaching of the Fathers of the Church*, St. Petersburg, 1882, v. 3, pp. 33-4) writes thus: "When the monks of Hadrumetum presented to Augustine that, according to his teaching, the obligation of asceticism and self-mortification was not required of them, Augustine felt the justice of the remark and began more often to repeat that grace does not destroy freedom; but such an expression of his teaching changed essentially nothing in Augustine's theory, and his very last works were not in accord with this thought. Relying on his own experience of a difficult rebirth by means of grace, he was carried along by a feeling of its further consequences. Thus as an accuser of Pelagius, Augustine is without doubt a great teacher of the Church; but in defending the truth, he himself was not completely and not always faithful to the truth. Therefore it is not surprising that in the Eastern Church the teaching of Augustine on grace was not received with such a lively participation as it was in the West. The Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (451) properly confirmed the condemnation of Pelagius' teaching, but concerning the teaching of Augustine it said not a word."

The West followed Augustine and has always regarded St. Cassian and his followers as being in error. Does not this failure to understand a basic point of Orthodox ascetic doctrine already prefigure, as it were, the tragic loss in the West of traditional monasticism, of Orthodox spirituality, of Christianity itself?

Because of this misunderstanding, also, St. Cassian was never canonized in the Western Church. Locally, however, in Marseilles and a few other places in southern Gaul, he was venerated as a saint, his feast on July 23[1] being one of the main feasts of the Abbey of St. Victor. In the Middle Ages his relics were kept whole in the Abbey of St. Victor in a marble tomb on four pillars, with a light burning before it day and night. Near Cannes, a hill once known as Arluc, where in antiquity there had been a temple of Venus and in Christian times a monastery for women, and where now there is a solitary chapel in a cypress grove, bears to this day the name of "St. Cassian"-- a silent reminder of what the West once had and then lost, but about which it may again, by the grace of God, learn from the Orthodox Church of Christ.

1. The Orthodox Church commemorates St. Cassian on February 29 (February 28 when there is no leap year).

AN OPEN LETTER

TO HIS EMINENCE IAKOVOS, GREEK ARCHBISHOP OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

Translators' Preface

THE INNOVATIONS and apostasy of Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop Iakovos reached new heights in two recent events. On January 19 of this year, in St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral in New York City, to mark "the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity," Archbishop Iakovos preached at a special ecumenistic service at which, according to the report of the *New York Times*, "because of Archbishop Iakovos' presence, some elements borrowed from the Eastern Liturgies were used and the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Choir sang." Then, on January 26, at the Greek Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York City, a specially composed "Doxology" was performed, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Patriarchate of Athenagoras. "Celebrants" at this service were: Archbishop Iakovos, Metropolitan Philip of the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, an Episcopalian bishop, the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, and the President of the Lutheran Church in America. According to *The Orthodox Observer*, the organ of the Greek Archdiocese, "the participation of non-Orthodox Prelates presented the congregation with a Common Prayer reminiscent of the early and undivided practice of universally convening in the name of the Lord." The full text of this "Doxology," together with other recent ecumenistic texts, was printed in the February issue of *The Orthodox Observer*, which shamelessly presents Patriarch Athenagoras as one whose "theology is so far ahead of our theological thinking and of our current patterns of dogmatical argumentation" that, in the words of Archbishop Iakovos (January and February issues of the same magazine), he has become the "spiritual father of the renaissance of Orthodoxy," one from whose "saintliness... a spiritual fragrance issues," one who has unbolted doors and left behind those defenders of the "minute, insignificant and stifling forms and formalities" of traditional Orthodoxy, those "bigots... of fanatic extremism."

Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop Iakovos are clearly attempting to demolish Greek Orthodoxy as it has been until now and, if possible, to lead other Orthodox Churches into perdition with them. Their success thus far in this attempt has been achieved through their auto-

cratic power used to crush all opposition (see *The Orthodox Word*, Nov.-Dec., 1968, pp. 267ff), through empty but dramatic gestures performed for the sake of headlines in the world press, and -- most fundamentally -- through a lamentable ignorance of Holy Orthodoxy on the part of many Orthodox believers themselves, these unfortunates whom Patriarch Athenagoras praises as "not knowing the differences in their dogmas, nor being concerned with them."

To such terrible apostasy the Orthodox world is now awakening, and it has found a leader in the person of the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, *Metropolitan Philaret*, whose Open Letters to Patriarch Athenagoras have been a model of resolute defense of Holy Orthodoxy, moderate in tone yet filled with concern for Orthodox truth and holy tradition, and with love for those who are going astray as well as for those who are being led astray by them. The following Open Letter to Archbishop Iakovos was occasioned by the recent "ecumenical" events which strive to hasten the "union" of Orthodoxy with the myriad errors and darknesses of the Western confessions.

By METROPOLITAN PHILARET

President of the Synod of Bishops
of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1969

YOUR EMINENCE:

IN CHURCH PRACTICE very much is based on precedent. Thus, the higher the position of him who sets the precedent, the more importance it may acquire. Therefore, acts performed by Orthodox hierarchs in their contacts with the representatives of other confessions or religions have a special significance, and in those cases in which they violate the order accepted over the centuries, they cannot leave us uninvolved. Our silence might be construed as consent and consequently lead into error both our own flock and the heterodox, who assume that our actions, and especially Divine services, are performed by all of us in conformance with our doctrines and canons. Therefore, something incorrectly permitted by one bishop may be taken for something permitted by the whole Church, and those who are "without" may form a misconception in regard to Orthodox doctrine itself. In an age such as this, when so much interest is shown by the representatives of various confessions toward the doctrine of others, we would then be giving them a stone instead of bread.

This is the reason why the latest actions of Your Eminence, which are invested with the authority also of His All-Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras, have greatly disturbed both us and our flock, and many others also. We have in mind your recent participation in a service at St. Patrick's Cathedral during the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity," and in the "Ecumenical Doxology" in the Greek Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York.

The very fact that these joint services were justly publicized in the press as novel manifestations having no precedent already indicates that they were introduced into the life of the Church as something unusual to her and not properly pertaining to her nature. Which ecclesiastical canon, which custom, which tradition gave You the right to introduce such novelties?

Orthodoxy by its very nature is distinguished by its fidelity to traditions and to the examples of the Holy Fathers. It is not without reason that St. Vincent of Lerins in his *Commonitorium*[1] indicated that what is truly Orthodox is that which has been accepted by the Church "...always, by everyone, and everywhere." A novelty that does not conform to this rule by this very fact bears in itself the stamp of unorthodoxy.

Your Eminence must be aware of the 45th Apostolic Canon, which reads: *Let a bishop, presbyter, or deacon who has only prayed with heretics be excommunicated, but if he has permitted them to perform any clerical office, let him be deposed.* The renowned canonist, Bishop Nikodim of Dalmatia, in his interpretation of this canon remarks that participation in such prayer with the heterodox "...means that we not only do not strive for their conversion to Orthodoxy, but are wavering in it ourselves."

In this case Your Eminence has not only apostatized from the age-old tradition of the Orthodox Church, which is founded on canons (Apostolic 10 and 45, Laodic. 6, 32, and 33), but also in very deed and words, following Patriarch Athenagoras, You have confessed a doctrine foreign to the Holy Fathers of our Church.

In Your sermon in St. Patrick's Cathedral, You stated that Church Unity should be understood as a call that "through such ecumenical practices and experiences as praying and working together we [may] arrive at the full knowledge of the truth that frees the faithful from the sin of false and ungodly apprehensions." The whole tone of Your sermon is not in proclaiming the Church's truth, but in seeking something new, even a new definition of "our relationship with the Triune God." At the same time, the Holy Fathers always regarded joint Church prayer as

1. On this Saint and his work see above, p. 67.

the culmination of the joining of erring persons to the true Church -- as the culmination, but not the means to it. Church prayer is a manifestation of an already existing unity of faith and spirit. We cannot have such unity with those Who teach otherwise than the Orthodox Church concerning the Trinity (*Filioque*), concerning the Most Holy Mother of God (Immaculate Conception by Catholics, absence of veneration by Protestants), concerning the hirarchy (Papal Infallibility by Catholics, denial of the sacrament of priesthood by the Protestants), *etc.* It is especially important to note that the Roman Catholics and Protestants have a doctrine of the Church entirely different from ours.

Orthodox ecclesiology has always been based on the understanding that there is only One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that schismatics, heretics, and persons of other religions are outside of her. We, therefore, cannot at all accept the doctrine of His Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras, expressed in his Christmas Message of 1968, that supposedly as a result of an impoverishment of love, "the Church which was established by Christ to be glorious, *without spot or wrinkle* (Eph. 5: 27), perfect and holy, was altered." If our Church was altered and is not the same that was established by our Saviour -- then there exists no more the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church concerning which the Saviour said, *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it* (St. Matt. 16: 18), but rather there now exist several Churches, none of which is fully true and holy.

In his speech during his visit to Rome in 1967, as well, His Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras publicly declared in the Basilica of St. Peter that the Church should "...return to the solid ground on which the undivided Church was founded," as if since 1054 the Church has not had this solid ground and as if before that time there existed no divisions. But inasmuch as the Patriarch and Your Eminence declare that You are only on the way toward the restoration of this "Undivided Church," then it turns out that for You such a Church does not yet exist. The Protestant "branch" theory of the Church which is accepted by the Patriarch and You inescapably leads to the conclusion that today the One Holy Church, supposedly, no longer exists. According to this theory, the Orthodox Church is as guilty of divisiveness as the heretics and schismatics who have fallen away from her, and all these communities that have separated themselves from her remain "branches" of the Church of Christ from which they have separated themselves. But if one can be a part of the Church without sharing her doctrines, this means that doctrines have only secondary importance. Precisely thus did Patriarch

Athenagoras express himself when in his Christmas Message he spoke with praise of the movement of people to the common chalice "...not knowing the differences in their dogmas, nor being concerned with them."

Such words would never have been said by the great predecessors of Patriarch Athenagoras: Sts. Proclos, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Photios, and others. But what is more, even if from the height of the Ecumenical Throne through human sinfulness heresy has sometimes been preached under the guise of truth, there has never yet been an example of a Patriarch declaring the unimportance of dogmas...

How distressing it is to read such a renunciation of patristic doctrine in a message of the Primate of the Church which was the Mother of our Russian Church.

In honoring this Primate, You Eminence unfortunately joined yourself in very deed to his indifference to truth, by organizing an unprecedented "Ecumenical Doxology" in Your Cathedral, in violation of the aforementioned canons. Your uniting there in joint Church prayer with Roman Catholics and Protestants was, as it were, an actualization of the call of Patriarch Athenagoras to move toward a general union with no concern for doctrines, in spite of the warning of the Apostle Paul against people who *would pervert the Gospel of Christ*. Do You not fear the further words of the Apostle, *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than what we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!* (Gal. 1: 7-8).

We, therefore, regard it our duty to protest decisively against the distortion of the doctrine of the Church which is so insistently declared by His Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras and Your Eminence. We protest against Your unorthodox "Ecumenical Doxology" and against the inclusion into the Diptychs by His All-Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras of the Roman Pope and of "all the confessions of the East and the West," which was announced in His Holiness' Christmas Message. The inclusion into the Diptychs has always been testimony that a given person is recognized as Orthodox. If the Fifth Ecumenical Council ordered the name of Theodore of Mopsuestia stricken from the Diptychs when it acknowledged his teaching to be unorthodox, then how can any Patriarch or Bishop now include in the Diptychs those who even nominally do not belong to the Orthodox Church, and who, on the contrary, openly continue to confess doctrines inconsistent with her dogmas? *You are uniting with the heterodox not in truth but in disdain for it.*

[Continued on back cover.]

A STRANGE MIRACLE OF
The Holy Great Martyr George

Concerning the Saracen who saw the vision
in the Saint's sacred Temple

THE EMIR OF SYRIA once sent his nephew to Diospolis (which the Saracens call Ramel [1]) in order to look into certain matters of that place. In this city there is a marvelous temple of Saint George. The Saracen saw it from afar and commanded his servants to transfer his baggage up to the catechumenate of that temple. There, after he had stopped to rest, he ordered that they bring in even his twelve camels. The priests of the temple begged him not to do this wicked thing; but he threatened them, and commanded that the camels be brought in. Immediately, however, as they were leading the camels into the temple, all of them -- Oh, the wonder! -- fell down and died. When the nephew of the Emir saw this miracle, he marvelled at the great power of Saint George and gave orders that they drag the camels out of the temple.

The next day, when the priest came to liturgize, the Saracen watched to see what he would do. But our man-befriending God opened the eyes of his mind and revealed unto him this truly strange thing. That is to say, while the priest was preparing the Holy Gifts, the Saracen saw that he killed an Infant and emptied its Blood into the Holy Chalice and that after he had cut the body to pieces, he placed it on the sacred paten. After the communion hymn was finished, he saw that the priest gave the Flesh and the Blood of the Child to the people, and he marvelled. After the Divine Liturgy, the priest took the best of those prosphoras which had not been used during the Liturgy and gave them to the Saracen. He asked the priest, "What are these?" And the priest answered him, "My efendi,"[2] these are some of the offerings with which we serve the Liturgy in our Church." Then the Saracen said to him with anger, "You served your liturgy with these today? Did I not see you killing a child and pouring its blood into the cup? Did you not cut its body to pieces and put them on the round tray and give them to the people? Do you think that I did not see these things that you did, you vile murderer?"

1. This is the present Ramallah, a city not far from Jerusalem on the way down from Damascus. To this day the Orthodox have a great church there dedicated to St George.
2. Efendi: an Arabic word derived from the Greek *afthendis*, meaning 'lord' or 'master.'

Hearing these things, the priest was terrified and said to the Saracen, "The Lord be glorified, Who has deemed you worthy, my efendi, to behold this terrible Mystery. From this I believe that you are great in the sight of God, and that God has numbered you among the saved." Amazed at the words of the priest, the Saracen said, "Are not, then, these things exactly even as I have seen them?" The priest answered, "Yea, my efendi, they are so and thus do we believe: that that bread and wine which we offer in our Liturgy are the Body and Blood of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. Yet I have never been deemed worthy to behold this, for I am a sinner; but all I see before me is bread and wine. And because my Lord and God has deemed you worthy, my effendi, to behold such a Mystery, I believe that you are great before God, because the great Fathers of our Church, as ones most worthy, beheld this wondrous Mystery."

Hearing these things and marvelling greatly, the Saracen bowed his head and thought for a long time. Afterward, as though awakening from sleep he came to himself, and after he had ordered his servants to go out, he said to the priest, "As I see and am informed, the faith of the Christians is true, and woe unto me who have passed my life in falsehood and vanity, in the religion of the Saracens, which is truly unclean. But since it is the will of God that I be saved, baptize me, that, at least from henceforth, I may serve God with a clean conscience." The priest told him, "I do not dare to baptize you, my efendi, because your uncle is a king, and if he learns of this he will both kill me and destroy the churches. Only, if you wish, depart from here secretly and go to the Patriarch of Jerusalem without revealing to him who you are and he will baptize you."

Then the Saracen found a garment of hair, and clothing himself with this one night he left secretly. Reaching Jerusalem, he went to the Patriarch and falling at his feet, he besought him to baptize him. After he had been baptized and eight days had passed, he said to the Patriarch, "Behold, that by divine grace, I have become a Christian; therefore, what must I do to be saved?" The Patriarch told him, "If you wish to be saved, go to the Mount of Sinai where there are found pious and virtuous monks, and become a monk, and keep the commandments of God. Thus you will be saved." Thereupon he went to Mount Sinai and became a monk. Having stayed there three years, he attained a great height of virtue. Afterwards he begged the Abbot to grant him permission to go to Ramel. When he received permission and had gone to that city, he went into the temple of St. George, where he met that God-fearing priest.

When he revealed to him who he was, he told him, "Behold, that by Divine grace and through your acceptable supplications, I became a Christian and a monk. However, I have a great desire to see the Lord Jesus Christ, and I beseech you fervently to fulfill my desire."

Then the priest glorified God and said, "Go to your uncle, the Emir, and in the presence of him and all the Saracens, confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and true God, the Creator of all creation, and that he became man and worked great miracles in the world and was crucified and buried and arose on the third day and ascended unto the heavens with glory. If you do this, you will with great audience behold the Lord."

Being persuaded, therefore, by those divine words of that pious priest, that praiseworthy monk set out immediately and went to the city where his uncle was. When night came he went up to the minaret of their mosque and began shouting, "Quickly come here, O ye Saracens, for I have a word to say to you." Hearing these things, they ran with torches, and seeing the monk they asked him what he had to tell them. And the monk said to them, "What do you ask me to tell you? Where is the nephew of the Emir -- the one that fled secretly?" They told him, "If by chance you know and tell us we will give you as much money as you desire." And the monk answered, "Take me to the Emir so that I may tell you." Then they seized him and brought him to the Emir with joy, saying, "This monk knows where your nephew is." The Emir asked him if, in truth, he knew, and the monk replied, "Yea, I know. I am he. But now I am a Christian, and I believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the One Godhead; and I confess that the Son of God became incarnate of the Ever-Virgin Mary, and worked great miracles in the world and was crucified and arose on the third day and ascended into the heavens and sits at the right hand of God the Father, and is about to come again to judge the living and the dead."

Hearing these things, his uncle, the Emir, was astonished and said, "What happened to you, O hapless one, that you abandoned your family, your wealth and your glory, and walk about thus, scorned like some beggar? Return to your religion and profess the prophet Mahomet and you will again receive your former rank." But the monk replied, "As many goods as I had then when I was a Saracen, they were all the devil's portion. This garment of hair which I wear now is my boast and my wealth and the earnest of the glory which I will enjoy because of my true faith in Christ. As for Mahomet, who led you astray, I anathematize his religion and renounce him."

The Emir, however, felt sorry for him and said to the Saracens that were there present, "He has lost his wits and does not know what he is saying. Throw him out and chase him away." But they told him, "You release him that has anathematized our Prophet and our religion? He is worthy of ten thousand deaths. Then we also, therefore, must renounce our religion and become Christians." Then the Emir, fearing lest they should be aroused even more so against him, gave them permission to do whatever they wished with him. Gnashing their teeth, they seized that blessed monk. When they had led him outside the city, they stoned him while he called upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus was that renowned one perfected in the good confession and went with boldness unto the Lord Whom he had longed for, and received the crown of Martyrdom.

For a great length of time, a radiant star appeared every night above that heap of rocks and would illumine that whole area. Seeing this, the Saracens marvelled. When some time had passed, the Emir gave the Christians permission to take the holy remains of the Martyr from under the pile of stones and, -- Oh, the wonder! -- his body was found intact, incorrupt and exceedingly fragrant. Kissing and embracing it with reverence, they buried it with hymns and psalmody, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory and the dominion unto the ages. Amen.

ST. GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR AND TROPHY-BEARER.
Fresco by the late Photios Kontoglou of blessed memory, who presented it to Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, Mass. Courtesy of the Monastery.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

[Continued from p. 41]

The Light was hidden only for a short time, in order to shine yet brighter.

The Mighty One went down into the depths of the earth in order to strike a blow to evil at its root. And in three days, as Jonah from the whale, Christ rises now from the grave!

Lift your heads, ye downcast, rejoice, ye sorrowful! Come together, ye who are scattered! Arise, ye fallen! May the storm of the sea of life not engulf you who are in sorrows, although your soul may be filled with evils and your life have drawn near to hell.

Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory? Where is the darkness that thought to hide the Sun of Justice?

Leap in spirit, all ye faithful, and joyfully cry out: "Thou didst rise as Conqueror, O Christ our God, announcing to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice! and to Thy Apostles granting peace, and to the fallen giving resurrection!"

CHRIST IS RISEN!

ΓΕΩΡ
ΓΙ
ΧΑΡ
ΦΩΤΙΩ

AN OPEN LETTER

(*Continued from page 76*)

We write these lines not in order simply to reproach or even less to offend Your Eminence or His Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras -- not in the least, especially as we have no ground to maintain enmity toward You or His Holiness.

On the contrary, we see a duty of brotherly love in again indicating to His Holiness the Patriarch and to You the ruinousness of the ecumenical path which You have chosen.

Oh, if You, instead of to the voices of interconfessional conferences and to the press, which is indifferent to religious truth, would hearken to the calls of the Holy Fathers of the Church, who erected the Church not upon compromises but upon firm observance of traditions and every iota of the divine dogmas! Their genuine love toward the heterodox consisted of zeal to enlighten them with the light of truth and in caring for their genuine reunion with the Church.

We are writing this in an open letter inasmuch as Your actions and statements have a public character, and in order that other Bishops of the Orthodox Church and the faithful might know that not all the Church agrees with the ruinous ecumenical direction which You have chosen. Let it be clear to everyone that the joint celebration with those of other beliefs which you have permitted is a lamentable unique episode which may not serve as a precedent or an example for others, but which calls forth the distress and the resolute protest of the Church's devoted children, as an action which is clearly unorthodox and in contradiction of the Holy Canons.

Your Eminence's devoted servant,
Metropolitan Philaret

(*Translated from the Russian text in* Orthodox Russia, *1969, no. 5.*)